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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Files Sex Discrimination Lawsuit against Phoenix Country Club

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Sept. 16, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard filed a lawsuit against the Phoenix Country Club ("PCC") today alleging ongoing violations of the Arizona Civil Rights Act's public accommodations provision prohibiting sex-based discrimination. The suit alleges that PCC engages in sex-based discrimination by excluding women from using the Men's Grill and men from using the Women's Grill.

The suit contends that many of PCC's meetings, conferences and events are broadly advertised to the general public and are attended by members of the general public. In addition, PCC provides catering services for many of these functions that are paid by members of the general public and through which PCC derives significant income.

According to the lawsuit, the Men's Grill contains amenities that are superior to the Women's Grill and other PCC dining areas, and it is well known within the business community as an ideal place to network, build business relationships and broker deals. Court documents indicate that PCC intends to retain the segregated dining areas after upcoming renovations and that the Men's Grill will retain superior amenities than those offered in other dining areas.

"The allegations against the Phoenix Country Club represent significant and systemic acts of discrimination," Goddard said. "I will aggressively pursue the Phoenix Country Club and any other institution that violates the law and the fundamental civil rights of Arizonans."

The lawsuit states that in December 2006, PCC member Logan Van Sittert and his wife Barbara Van Sittert submitted a letter to the president of PCC's Board of Directors asking PCC to reverse its policy of excluding women from the Men's Grill. After receiving the letter, the Board did not change the policy.

The lawsuit further alleges that within days of the Van Sitterts submitting the letter, they were subjected to verbal abuse, threats and Mr. Van Sittert's PCC locker was vandalized. In addition, the lawsuit claims that after the Van Sitterts complained about the segregated dining facilities, PCC's Board of Directors amended its bylaws and revised its "Etiquette" policy. The suit alleges that the changes targeted the Van Sitterts and others who oppose PCC's segregated dining practices by threatening them with suspension or expulsion if they filed, or threaten to file, a lawsuit against PCC or made "derogatory or otherwise injurious comments to the media" about PCC.

The Attorney General's Office is seeking actual and compensatory damages for the Van Sitterts, including emotional distress damages, as well as a permanent injunction against PCC prohibiting it from discriminating on the basis of sex. The suit also seeks a civil penalty against PCC to vindicate the public interest.

This lawsuit is the result of an investigation by the Civil Rights Division of the Arizona Attorney General's Office. A copy of the complaint is available at www.azag.gov.

The Arizona Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodation based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry. Any person who believes that his or her civil rights have been violated should call the Arizona Attorney General's Civil Rights Division toll-free at 1-877-491-5742, or toll free via TDD at 1-877-624-8090.

For more information, contact Anne Hilby at (602) 542-8019.

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